



RESEARCH UPDATE 1999

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Staff Directory Appendix A

Forward

The Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory is a 55,000 acre USDA Agricultural Research Service facility run in cooperation with the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station. The Laboratory was established in 1924 following the closure of the Fort Keogh Army Remount Station which was a remnant of the original Fort Keogh Army fort established in 1877.

The broad mission of the Laboratory is to develop ecologically and economically sustainable range livestock production system that ultimately meet consumer needs. Research is multi-disciplinary revolving around four broad disciplines: 1) rangeland management and ecology; 2) beef cattle genetics; 3) range animal nutrition; and 4) beef cattle reproductive physiology. The objective of this publication is to provide other researchers, agency personnel, rangeland agriculturalists (i.e., ranchers and farmers), and other interested customers with an overview of recent research activities and findings at Fort Keogh.

We believe it imperative that readers understand that agriculture research, such as that outlined herein, is the foundation upon which the American dream is built because until agriculture works, nothing else matters. Agriculture is America's primary and largest industry and its continued success is dependent first and foremost on successful research and development programs such as those outlined herein. The economic well being of the entire United States is linked closely to: 1) the conservation of its natural resource base, particularly soil and water; and 2) continued

advancement in the development of new agriculture technology. In the Northern Great Plains, this linkage is most closely tied to the continued conservation of rangeland resources and the development of rangeland livestock production technology. As such, the continued success of the Fort Keogh research program is critical to the long-term economic well being of Northern Great Plains agriculture specifically and the Northern Great Plains region in general.



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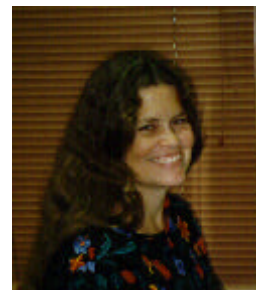
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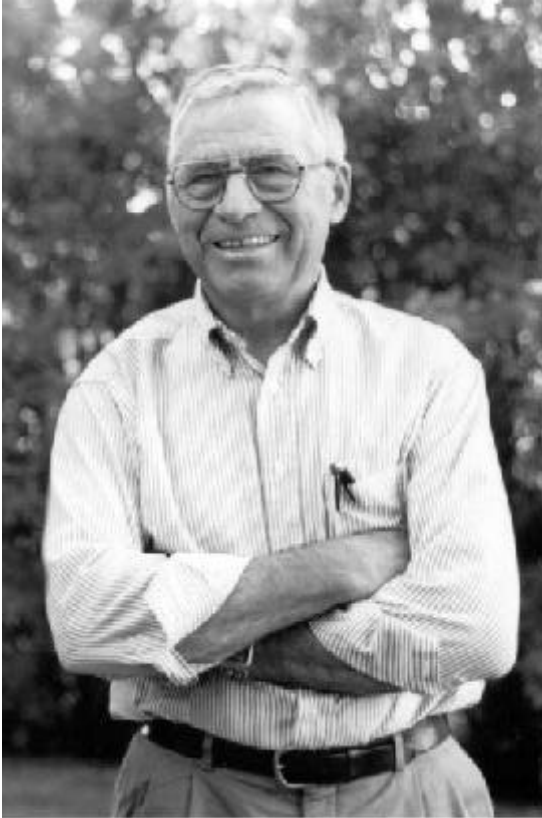


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Bill Almy, Producer of the Year
Fort Keogh Open House June 1999

Producer Recognition Award

You can generally find Bill Almy with his ear pressed to the phone. If not, you can guess that he'll be doing something in the lines of fixing, scheming, buying, selling, riding, driving... If you find him napping, mark your calendar.

Born on September 7, 1926 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this first of seven children of William Ellery and Gertrude Thayer Almy was christened William Ellery Almy, Jr. "Billy" was raised near Valley Forge, approximately 30 miles west of Philadelphia. His first brush with agriculture occurred at age 1½, when he climbed the fence at his Grandma Thayer's and fell into the chicken yard with the chickens. As a child, he was active in 4-H, raising pigs. Although it was leased out, Billy's

chores included other farming responsibilities at the Diamond Rock farm. A family rumor has it that the farm was purchased to keep Billy involved in wholesome activity, since it was evident that he would create activity if not provided with it.

After graduating high school at age 16, Bill attended the University of Pennsylvania with studies in engineering. He also served in the Army Air Corp. It was during this time that he took private flying lessons and soloed with the funds garnered from card games with fellow corpsmen. Inspired by childhood readings of the Jack London novels, Bill struck out for Alaska. The deliberately vague history of this era was always explained to the children that he "got lost on the way to Alaska and wound up in Alzada." It was in 1948 at this very southeastern part of Montana that he began his career in agriculture, which continues to this day.

His first Montana ranch hand job was at the Jim Oliver ranch. Later he met and courted country schoolteacher Joyce Darlene Oscliner. After their marriage November 23, 1951, he brought his bride to his quarters on the Little Missouri, where he held a lease on the Walt Ford place. They later leased the Davenport place from Jim Newland. During these years, three trips were made to Belle Fourche, S.D. to "receive shipment" of three kids, William Ellery III, Curtis Thayer, and Dawn Darlene.

In 1960, Bill and Joyce, in partnership with former Pennsylvanian Loren Ratcliff, purchased the Hamilton Brothers ranch at Ismay, Montana. In keeping with the personal history of a Pennsylvania (Keystone State) upbringing, Bill had earlier created the single iron Keystone brand. The new corporation was also named Keystone Ranches. Bill and Joyce bought out the partnership after about one year. They later added Elizabeth Ann to complete their family of four children.

Bill utilized his engineering skills in executing various improvements to the 22,000-acre ranch. This included providing vital water to ten sections with two buried railroad tank car cisterns, situated on elevation serving fourteen miles of pipeline. Twenty reservoirs or spring developments supplement the seasonal flows of the Pennel and O'Fallon Creeks. Eighteen miles of cross fencing were added, as were the necessary calving facilities and steel corrals.

Early years found sheep and cattle grazing on Keystone Ranches, until the coyotes won. After that, the main concentration was on building a genetically improved cow/calf herd. Efforts included incorporating the Line 1 Bulls and "Composite Bulls" from the Fort Keogh Research Station at Miles City. In 1968, artificial insemination was employed at the ranch, using Beef Brown Swiss in an attempt to increase milking capacity on the cattle. Later, exotic cattle were imported from Canada. In the 1980's, bred heifers were added to the ranch line, and the 90's saw the addition of Black Gelbvieh bulls. Bill has used various marketing strategies, including the futures market. Diversification with farming began in the 1970's. The ghosts of homesteads past once again saw sod broken for the planting of wheat, barley, and oats. This was added to the strong hay base already in existence, consisting of alfalfa, clover and grass.

In the late 1960's Bill and Joyce were primary founders of the Baker Livestock Auction. Bill was the manager 1970-1974. They again became involved in the market when they bought Baker Livestock Auction in 1989. It became the current Baker Livestock Exchange. Bill was also among the buyers to first become involved in video sales, and currently serves on the board of directors for Producers Video of Fort Worth, Texas.

Community involvement has included various associations including 4-H leadership, school board, Stockgrowers Association, State Simmental Association, Montana Association of Grazing Districts, Montana Grain Growers Association, Custer County Conservation District, Montana Beef Council, Baker New Breeds Association, North Plains Feeder Association, Fort Keogh Advisory Board, and.. it must be mentioned... served as Mayor of Ismay.

Once the King of the Slide Rule, Bill has been hog-tied and prodded into the computer age. He still can be found with a yellow tablet in hand, however, and remains faithful to the use of his heirloom turn-of-the-century transit. He enjoys pithy quotations, and has been known to spout occasional Latin. His special love of marketing has kept this grandfather of eleven consistently busy. He has earned his spurs through the survival of hard winters, green horses, drought, cattle prices, army cutworms, over-zealous motorcycles, Russian knapweed, beaver dams (damn beavers!), predators, grasshoppers, and a close call with an auger. It is fitting that the last year of this century will find Fort Keogh honoring this man who was a pioneer in his generation. Living through and being part of the agricultural revolution, Bill has embraced many changes. He has been willing to implement "cutting edge" ideas.

Bill's respect for education and love for challenges has netted a varied and productive life. With the hoopla and hype as the new century dawns, you'll probably find Bill . . with his ear pressed to the phone.



W. Carter Snell, Producer of the Year
Fort Keogh Open House June 1999

Producer Recognition Award

W. Carter Snell was born January 27, 1922, at Miles City, Montana, at the Darcey Hospital. He attended school from the first grade through high school, graduating May 24, 1939. He then went on to attend Helena Aeronautics School from 1939 to 1940, going on to Carroll College in the fall of 1940 through 1941. The spring of 1942, he moved to Fort Morgan, Colorado, to take a job on an Army contract at Pilot's Pre-glider Training School.

In 1943, Carter moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, and took a job with Massey Flying Service as an aircraft and engine mechanic. They had a flight school for the Army Air

Corp. He set up his own parachute loft and packed chutes for them and contracted to pack parachutes with United Airlines out of Cheyenne.

When the army contract was over, Carter returned to Miles City to enlist in the Navy; the Government said no to his enlisting as the FAA wanted him to stay in Civil Aviation. The draft board also said no to Carter's serving in the service for the same reason, but six months later finally accepted him into the service. He was sent to Sand Point, Idaho, and then on to Norman, Oklahoma, to the Naval Air Technical training Center where he was an honor graduate. He was discharged from Jacksonville in February 1946.

In June of 1944, he married Hariette Wetzler in the Episcopal Church in Miles City, Montana. Together they had two children, Charles and Diane. They lived in Greeley, Colorado, where Carter worked at an airport until moving back to the Miles City area in the fall of 1947. Carter worked in a seed-cleaning warehouse until the spring of 1948 when he moved to the Mispah "Herrin Place" working for Nora Wiley. Nora sold out to John Scott and the Snells purchased a ranch in the North Country at Jordan and moved once again in March 1951.

Carter has raised both cattle and sheep. He started out with Herefords and was interested in selective breeding and started a record of performance system in 1952 with the cattle. The records led to a cross-breeding with Black Angus in the late 1950's. Then in 1968, artificial insemination led to the first Simmental cross calves in the spring of 1970. As the performance industry began to be noticed more, and the advent of

computers, sire selection took some meaning. The 1952 steer calf crop averaged 504 pounds - calving started April 5, to sale weight December 2 in Miles City. The indexing and subsequent selection began to show results. By 1975, with sale date cut back to November 1, the average was about 560 pounds. By 1990, the sale weight was 630 pounds.

Organizations Carter belongs to are: Elks, Montana Stockgrower's Association, Miles City Club, Montana Beef Performance Association, American Hereford Association, American Angus Association, American Simmental Association, Montana Simmental Association, National Cattlemen's Association, and is a 4-H leader for the Crow Rock Coyotes 4-H Club.

Carter has served on the Eastern Montana Industries board, Advisory committee at Fort Keogh, Board of Directors for the Montana Stockgrowers Association, and the Livestock Industry Laboratories Study Committee which he chaired for 5 of the many years he served on it. He has also served on the Montana Stockgrowers Animal Health Committee as well as chairing it for several years.

In 1997, Carter sold his ranch at Jordan, retiring to Miles City where he has taken up golf and works diligently on his computer in his spare time. He is still actively serving on boards in order to keep up with his avid interest in the ever changing livestock industry.

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FORT KEOGH LIVESTOCK AND RANGE RESEARCH LABORATORY

Home of Line 1 Herefords, Rod and the Bobs and Mikes, and lots of exciting range and beef cattle research.

Fort Keogh's Mission

To research and develop ecologically and economically sustainable range animal management systems that ultimately meet consumers needs.

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Let us know what you think. We welcome feedback as we try to keep you up-to-date on research activities at the Fort. Send comments about our web site to web@larri.ars.usda.gov. General questions and comments about Fort Keogh may be directed to staff@larri.ars.usda.gov. Specific questions and comments pertaining to our research may be sent to individual scientists, or you can try scientists@larri.ars.usda.gov and we will try to respond as time permits.

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